

PRIORITY WATERSHED AND PRIORITY LAKE GRANT PROGRAM

Authorization: s. 281.65, Wis. Stats., and ch. NR 120, Wis. Admin. Code

Budget: 2005-2007 Fiscal Year = \$ 6,000,000 new biennium bond revenue
(non-bondable cropping practices paid from GPR and federal funding)

Objective: To prevent or eliminate nonpoint sources of water pollution in designated priority watershed projects in Wisconsin.

Eligibility: Priority watersheds as determined by the Department.

Level of Assistance: Cost-sharing of between 70% - 100% for about 107 installed best management practices on land surrounding rivers, streams, lakes, etc., within designated priority watershed projects.

Priorities: Priority watershed projects designated by the DNR.

Eligible Types of Projects: (not all-inclusive)

Cropping practices (nutrient management, pesticide management, grazing rotation, and crop protection, etc.); field diversions, terraces, grassed waterways; stream and shoreline protection (crossing, fencing, shoreline buffers, shaping & seeding, etc.); barnyard runoff management, manure storage facilities, etc.; wetland restoration, agricultural sediment basin, lake sediment treatment.

Applications: Started in 1978' currently closed to new application. The last watershed projects designated in 1995; last projects will end in 2009.

History: The program is a joint effort of the DNR, Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP), the University of Wisconsin Extension (UWEX), counties (usually through their Land Conservation Departments), municipalities, and lake districts with assistance from a variety of federal, state, and local agencies. The Wisconsin Land and Water Conservation Board designates priority watershed and lake projects, approves implementation plans, recommends funding levels and priorities, and recommends changes to the governor and DNR that will improve program effectiveness.

How Priority Watershed Projects Were Selected in the Past

Projects were selected from watersheds ranked in water quality management (basin) plans. To assist the targeting and selection of new priority watershed or lake projects, and to meet federal and state requirements for ranking priority waters, Wisconsin developed and incorporated watershed ranking criteria into the water quality management plans written for each of the state's river basins. The system ranks streams, lakes, and

groundwater separately, by watershed, in categories of high, medium, or low priority based on factors including:

1. Potential to respond positively and/or be protected by nonpoint source controls,
2. Presence of a unique environment for endangered or threatened species,
3. Water quality and habitat degradation impacts on fish populations and diversity
4. A variety of water chemistry criteria,
5. The macroinvertebrate biotic index rating,
6. Presence of negative changes in the stream morphology and vegetation,
7. Classification as a threatened stream,
8. Classification as an outstanding or exceptional resource water,
9. Sensitivity of a lake to phosphorus loading,
10. Classification of a lake as a high resource or high recreation use lake, and
11. Susceptibility of groundwater to contamination based on depth to bedrock, bedrock type, depth to water table, soil characteristics, and surface deposits.

The ranking system used numeric criteria for streams and lakes with the highest number representing the highest priority watershed. Watersheds were eligible for consideration if they rank high for streams, lakes, and/or groundwater.

Potential local sponsors were notified of watershed project eligibility and, if interested, they submitted an application to the DNR. Projects were then further reviewed and ranked by regional advisory committees and other state agencies prior to being recommended to the Land and Water Conservation Board for placement on the board's five year planning schedule.

The Planning Stage and Beyond

Once projects received formal designation by the Land and Water Conservation Board, funding was provided to support local staff and the establishment of local project teams. The priority watershed planning process, which on average takes two years, includes extensive land use inventories and detailed water resources appraisals. The appraisal information provides guidance on establishment of the water resources objectives and the pollutant load reductions needed to meet various water resource objectives. The land inventory results were used to identify major pollutant sources and the management practices that can be used to obtain needed pollutant reductions. Finally critical site criteria and cost-share eligibility criteria were established to complete the implementation plan.

Prior to the project being implemented, watershed plans were formally approved by both the County Board(s) for the counties in which they are located and by the Land and Water Conservation Board. The implementation of watershed plans was then carried out at the local level, in large part, through staff supported by grants from the DNR. Implementation of priority watershed plans generally occurs over a 10 to 12 year period. The Department provides cost sharing for up to seventy percent of the installation costs

of the practices. Best management practices must conform with watershed plans and be maintained for at least ten years after the practices are installed.

While the vast majority of practices installed within a watershed are done so on a voluntary basis, state statute requires that all projects identify as critical those sites which are significant sources of pollution upon which best management practices must be implemented in order to obtain a reasonable likelihood that the water quality objectives established in the plan can be achieved. During implementation, local project managers work closely with landowners that have sites which meet the critical site criteria in the watershed plan to obtain pollutant loading reductions. For those cases where progress is not being made, enforcement actions are then begun.

Contacts: Nonpoint Source Region Coordinator

South Central Region:	Jim Amrhein	(608) 275-3280
	Andy Morton	(608) 275-3111
	Ruth Johnson	(715) 635-4142
	Carolyn Betz	(608) 266-9262
Northern Region:	Tom Blake	(715) 365-8940
	Ruth King	(715) 635-4142
Northeast Region:	John Young	(920) 492-5854
Southeast Region:	Craig Webster	(414) 263-8625
	Tony Fischer	(262) 574-2125
West Central Region:	Micah Oriedo	(715) 359-2402
	Cindy Koperski	(608) 785-9984
	Dan Helsel	(715) 284-1431
	Karen Voss	(715) 839-3746

Program Managers:

Grant Manager: *(grant reimbursement payment processing, financial status of grant, ACRA processing & management)*

Barbara Ingram, CF/8
Department of Natural Resources
P.O. Box 7921
Madison, WI 53707-7921
Phone: (608) 267-7152
E-mail: Barbara.Ingram@dnr.state.wi.us

Watershed Program Manager: *(watershed technical information, cost share agreement technical information, allocation of funds implementation)*

Corinne Billings, WT/2
Department of Natural Resources
P.O. Box 7921
Madison, WI 53707-7921
Phone: (608) 264-6261
E-mail: Corinne.Billings@dnr.state.wi.us

Website: <http://www.dnr.state.wi.us/org/caer/cfa/EF/NPS/pwatershed.html>